

B. Amendment to the Claims

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing method comprising:
a closing step of placing a substrate in a processing bath and closing the processing bath; [[and]]

an evacuation step of evacuating the closed processing bath;

a supply step of supplying a processing solution into the evacuated processing bath; and

a pressure control step of changing an internal pressure of the processing bath with the substrate dipped in [[a]] the processing solution,

wherein the pressure control step comprises ~~an evacuation step of~~ evacuating the processing bath and then pressurizing the processing bath.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the pressure control step comprises repeating a cycle including the evacuation [[step]] and pressurization [[step]] of the processing bath a plurality of ~~number of~~ times.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the pressure control step comprises ~~reducing the internal pressure of the processing bath to a~~

~~pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure, and controlling the internal pressure of the processing bath within a pressure range lower than [[the]] atmospheric pressure.~~

5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein a substrate to be processed has a depression, and the pressure control step comprises changing the internal pressure of the processing bath such that an air bubble in the depression is released from the depression.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a protective film formation step of forming a protective film on a processed substrate before the substrate is unloaded from the processing bath.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6, wherein the protective film is made of pure water.

8. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing method comprising:
an alcohol supply step of supplying alcohol to a substrate having a depression;
a processing solution supply step of supplying a processing solution to the substrate, and allowing the processing solution to enter the depression; and
an evaporation step of evaporating the alcohol and at least a portion of the processing solution in the depression,

wherein a cycle including the alcohol supply step, processing solution supply step, and evaporation step is repetitively performed a plurality of ~~number of~~ times.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the alcohol supply step, processing solution supply step, and evaporation step are performed by placing a substrate to be processed in a closed processing bath.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, further comprising, after the processing solution supply step and before the evaporation step, a discharge step of discharging the processing solution from the processing bath.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the processing solution supply step comprises supplying the processing solution to the processing bath such that a liquid level of the processing solution in the processing bath containing the substrate rises across a surface of the substrate.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the processing solution supply step comprises supplying the processing solution to the processing bath such that the liquid level of the processing solution rises at a rate of 0.001 to 1.0 m/s.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the alcohol supply step, processing solution supply step, and evaporation step are performed at a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 9, further comprising a protective film formation step of forming a protective film on a processed substrate before the substrate is unloaded from the processing bath.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the protective film is made of pure water.

16. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing apparatus comprising:
a closable processing bath ~~for placing in which~~ a substrate is placed; ~~[[and]]~~
a pressure control mechanism ~~for controlling~~ configured to control an
internal pressure of ~~[[the]]~~ said processing bath; ~~and~~
a supply mechanism configured to supply a processing solution into said
processing bath,

wherein said pressure control mechanism ~~performs a cycle of evacuating
and pressurizing said processing bath at least once~~ evacuates said processing bath before
said supply mechanism supplies the processing solution into said processing bath, and then
evacuates and pressurizes said processing bath after said supply mechanism supplies the

processing solution into said processing bath, while the substrate is dipped in [[a]] the
processing solution in said processing bath.

17-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Original) A substrate processing apparatus comprising:

a closable processing bath for placing a substrate having a depression;

an alcohol supply mechanism for supplying alcohol to the substrate in said
processing bath;

a processing solution supply mechanism for supplying a processing solution
to the substrate in said processing bath;

a discharge mechanism for discharging the processing solution in said
processing bath to outside said processing bath; and

a pressure control mechanism for evacuating said processing bath to
evaporate the alcohol and at least a portion of the processing solution in the depression,
wherein said alcohol supply mechanism, processing solution supply
mechanism, discharge mechanism, and pressure control mechanism so operate as to repeat
a plurality of number of times a cycle including supply of the alcohol by said alcohol
supply mechanism, supply of the processing solution by said processing solution supply
mechanism, discharge of the processing solution by said discharge mechanism, and
evacuation by said pressure control mechanism.

21. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein said processing solution supply mechanism supplies the processing solution to said processing bath such that a liquid level of the processing solution in said processing bath rises across a surface of the substrate.

22. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said processing solution supply mechanism supplies the processing solution to said processing bath such that the liquid level of the processing solution rises at a rate of 0.001 to 1.0 m/s.